

AN ARCHDEACON'S APPRECIATION

By Bro. J.L. Springer.

At a time when the world is only now rediscovering Africa, the contribution of Prince Hall as a Barbadian and a black man must mark him out as a son of Africa who was far ahead of his time. The significant following across the world of which the Prince Hall Fraternity now boasts, speaks volumes of his foresight.

Prince Hall appeared on the American scene at a time when people of colour were excluded from Masonic membership among other things. Rather than spending time brooding over this misfortune, he and some of his friends got together and formed in 1787, African Lodge No. 459 in the city of Boston.

It is no mean achievement that they were able to obtain a charter from the Grand Lodge of England some seventy years before slavery was abolished in the U.S.A. Not surprisingly, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts refused to recognize them and African Lodge No. 459 survived for a while, becoming dormant with the death of M.W.M. Prince Hall.

However the Lodge was revived in 1808 by friends of the founder, who named it together with two other Lodges the M. W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge.

The proud African spirit of Prince Hall is reflected in the mission statement issued at the time of the Lodge's revival:

"We publicly declare ourselves free and independent of
any Lodge from this day, and we will not be tributary of
governed by any Lodge but that of our own."

Thus, Prince Hall Grand Lodge had declared without hatred or rancour its independence and pride at one and the same time.

I am proud to be an heir of this great African-American-Bajan who refused to be kept down, and I salute Prince Hall Masons everywhere as we celebrate this important land-mark in the history of the Fraternity.

May God richly bless us in all our fraternal endeavours.

By Senator, Venerable J. L. Springer, G.C.M., B.A.;
Archdeacon of Barbados; Grand Chaplain M.W.Prince
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Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS.